

UN SYSTEM TASK TEAM ON THE **POST-2015** UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



BUILDING RESILIENCE TO DISASTERS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS *Lessons from the Hyogo Framework for Action*

Thematic Think Piece

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Following on the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Secretary-General established the UN System Task Team in September 2011 to support UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders. The Task Team is led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme and brings together senior experts from over 60 UN entities and international organizations to provide system-wide support to the post-2015 consultation process, including analytical input, expertise and outreach.

BUILDING RESILIENCE TO DISASTERS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Lessons from the Hyogo Framework for Action

This is the second Thematic Think Piece on Disaster Risk and Resilience developed by UN entities to support discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. The paper outlines the modus operandi of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction partnership in working with and empowering stakeholders to build partnerships and political legitimacy for international agreements in the context of disaster risk reduction. With this approach the paper refers to the directions outlined in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.¹

Introduction

1. Disaster risk continues to increase globally, with more people and assets located in areas of high risk. Over the past 30 years, the world's population has grown by 87 per cent. The proportion of the population living in flood-prone river basins increased by 114 per cent and on cyclone-exposed coastlines by 192 per cent.² More than half of the world's large cities, with populations ranging from 2 to 15 million, are currently located in areas of high risk of seismic activity.³ The continued growth in cities and urban areas presents a further challenge. Half of humanity now lives in urban centres, with 70 per cent of the world's population expected to live in urban areas by 2050. This growth is largely driven in low- and middle-income nations in locations already prone to earthquakes, droughts and floods.

2. Compounding the accumulation of social and economic risk to disasters is climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlighted that, as a result of climate change, the frequency of heavy precipitation events would likely increase in the 21st century

¹ The *Hyogo Framework of Action* and subsequent related documents like the Mid-Term Review of the HFA in 2011; the first Think Piece on Disaster Risk and Resilience; and the background paper Towards a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are available on <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/1037>.

² UNISDR, 2011: Revealing Risk, Redefining Development. Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011.

³ UNDP. April 2011: "Supercities face high quake risk". Newsroom UNDP. Accessed: 4 October 2011. <<http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2011/april/supercities-face-high-quake-risk-says-undp-expert.en>>

over many regions and increases in the frequency of warm daily temperature extremes and decreases in cold extremes would occur on a global scale.⁴ Heat waves will very likely increase in length, frequency and/or intensity over most land areas, as will the average maximum wind speed of tropical cyclones in many ocean basins. Climate change, therefore, is a main driver of risk across sectors.

3. The *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*, endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, aims for substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries. What has become clear over the implementation period of the *Hyogo Framework of Action* is that disaster risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue that requires a long term planning perspective, mainstreaming and integration across sectors, and a change in mindset from response to prepare and prevent. Just as important is the realisation that reducing the risks and impacts of disasters is a shared responsibility among the many actors and stakeholders. As such, the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction partnership, deliberately and purposefully advocates for, encourages and activates many stakeholders and partnerships. This inclusive, multistakeholder and shared responsibility approach, supported by the *Hyogo Framework of Action*, is core to the strength of the Strategy and demonstrates a model for multilateral engagement.

4. Recognising that disaster risk reduction is a prerequisite for sustainable development is also a fundamental principle. The Rio+20 outcome document calls for an acceleration of the implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action*, and for a renewed sense of urgency to be taken in integrating disaster risk reduction into policies, plans, programmes and budgets and to be considered within relevant future frameworks.⁵ Importantly, Rio+20 acknowledged the roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders in the implementation, reflecting a clear understanding that building resilience to disasters goes beyond the State.

⁴ Christopher B. Field and others, eds., *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012). Available from <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX>

⁵ See 'The Future We Want', UNCSO Rio+20 Outcome Document (2012), A/RES/66/288

Hyogo Framework for Action – the guide to reducing risk and building resilience

5. The *Hyogo Framework for Action* was agreed upon in the weeks following the Indian Ocean Tsunami. In the aftermath of the Tsunami, two fundamental pillars of disaster risk reduction were re-enforced: (1) that so-called ‘natural’ disasters are a consequence of development practices and (2) that the responsibility for disaster risk reduction goes beyond the State, and that all stakeholders, from individual citizens through to the private sector, have a critical role to play.

6. The *Hyogo Framework for Action* is also a recognition of, and desire for disaster risk to be addressed through partnership. The rationale behind this is simple. Central government is not solely responsible for development, nor is it always best placed to address disaster risk at the local level. The complexities and cross-cutting nature of disaster risk demands a holistic and differentiated response. If the inadequacies of a development model that increase disaster risk are to be comprehensively addressed, then a coordinated approach, engaging all stakeholders, is required.

7. With this approach, the *Hyogo Framework for Action* strengthens and guides international cooperation efforts, generates the political momentum necessary to ensure that disaster risk reduction is used as a foundation for sound national and international development agendas, and provides a common language and framework for action.⁶

8. At the same time, there are still many gaps and challenges especially in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action which are important to rectify in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA II). For example, more needs to be done to mainstream and integrate disaster risk reduction into development, climate change adaptation, environmental and humanitarian planning. There is a continued accumulation of risks from population shifts, the density of built up environments, the degradation of ecosystems, and shortcomings in development models due to choices made by a range of

⁶ See the Midterm Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action, available from www.unisdr.org/files/18197_midterm.pdf.

stakeholders. Indeed, coordination and coherent action on disaster risk reduction remains a challenge across the different sectors and levels of government.⁷

9. Another core challenge is that, for many, reducing disaster risk is still operationalised through a humanitarian lens. While parts of the disaster risk reduction framework are critical to the humanitarian agenda (such as preparedness and early warning systems) placing the coordination of risk reduction in response and civil protection areas limits the ability of stakeholders including the development, planning, finance and sectoral line ministries from taking ownership for reducing underlying risks.

Localising and leveraging partnerships for risk reduction

10. During the implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action* the value of engaging with stakeholders from across sectors has gained momentum. From the establishment of national platforms in over 80 countries, to active regional platforms for disaster risk reduction in all regions, and a number of subregions, through to the emergence of sector-specific advisory groups covering local government, parliamentarians, inter-governmental organizations and the private sector.

11. Central to implementing disaster risk reduction strategies at the country-level are national platforms. These nationally owned and led multi-stakeholder mechanisms are designed to coordinate implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action*, through the engagement of relevant national stakeholders. While there are variations in the effectiveness, composition and focus of national platforms and in the participation of civil society and the private sector, the entry point created by national platforms is a starting point that can be strengthened. This includes the need to align national platforms, and related national strategies and policies at the local level, where much of the implementation occurs. Engaging and empowering local governments to take necessary actions to reduce and respond to risk remains a challenge. This requires better alignment of national and local policies, and development of capacities at the local level.

⁷ Ibid.

12. Regional platforms for disaster risk reduction have become important fora to support and enhance national level *Hyogo Framework of Action* implementation and to develop strategies and collective actions to address cross-boundary risks in a combined, coordinated manner. As with national platforms, each regional platform has developed based on the region's context and dynamics. For example, the agenda in the Pacific is focused on bringing together the disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation agendas under a single framework. In Asia, a ministerial-level forum provides visible leadership on addressing disaster risk through a binding ASEAN agreement.

13. In addition to national and regional platforms, there are thematic platforms on disaster risk reduction, such as those on ecosystem based disaster risk reduction, that generate evidence for making the case for risk reduction. Other thematic platforms, such as those on education, try to ensure that risk reduction concepts are embedded in education from primary to tertiary level

14. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held biannually, gathers together a diverse and all encompassing group of shareholders. The Global Platform does not operate like UN conferences with a formal negotiated outcome. The range of participants represents the shared responsibility for implementing the *Hyogo Framework of Action*, and provides a space for genuine cross-sector engagement and exchange of knowledge and experiences in disaster risk reduction. The General Assembly has recognized the Global Platform as being the main forum for strategic advice, coordination and partnership development for disaster risk reduction.

Stakeholders and partnerships

15. The strength of the *Hyogo Framework for Action* is the ability to influence and guide diverse groups and generate partnerships amongst a wide variety of stakeholders (not just national governments) including local government representatives, science and technology institutions, parliamentarians, interest groups and community practitioners, the private sector, and media. These stakeholders have emerged as partners who work with and support national governments to reduce the risks and impacts of disasters and build the resilience of communities.

Local governments

16. Half of humanity lives in urban centres today – a figure projected to rise to two-thirds in little over a generation. This escalating concentration of people, economic activities and assets in urban areas is increasing disaster risks due to amplified exposure which is further escalated in absence of planning, uncontrolled urbanization and lack of preparedness, amongst other reasons. Therefore good local governance, sustainable urban management and development, effective decentralization and good devolution of resources to the local level help to build the resilience of nations and communities. The interventions of active, competent local governments build safer and resilient communities. Local governments in turn need to be supported at the national level through sound policies and sustained, sufficient financial commitments.

17. The ‘Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready’⁸ campaign has been attempting to address this need by supporting sustainable urbanization, promoting resilience activities, increasing local level understanding of disaster risk, and encouraging commitments by local and national governments to make disaster risk reduction and climate change a policy priority.

Science and technology institutions

18. Translating the disaster risk reduction agenda into action requires sound evidence, reliable information, and good data. Science and technology institutions play a critical role in producing models, evidence and scenarios on disasters and suggestions on how to reduce their risk (from flood mitigation models, land use planning, health and education infrastructure, ecosystem based approaches, earthquake monitoring, and early warning systems).

19. A clear priority is to build on the evidence created by science and technology institutions. This requires more reliable data, for example on disaster losses. Indeed, accounting for disaster losses will provide information for modelling and analysis as well as

⁸ The Making Cities Resilient: ‘My City is Getting Ready!’ campaign addresses issues of local governance and urban risk. Over 1,250 cities have joined the global campaign which brings together a wide range of partners working to build resilient cities. See <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/>

encourage governments and the private sector to take ownership over their stock of risk and identify strategic trade-offs, when making decisions which may have an impact on risk. Currently, 43 States have reported the existence of an updated national disaster loss database; this needs to increase.

Parliamentarians

20. Parliamentarians are crucial in setting national policy and norms, oversight, legislation for risk reduction. Parliaments, in most countries, are instrumental in increasing political and economic investment in making socio-economic development disaster resilient. Legislators often oversee policy changes and budget allocation, in addition to their primary role in legislation and oversight. Parliamentarians with increased understanding and knowledge can play a strategic role in bridging long-existing gaps in disaster risk reduction between national governments and local authorities. Informed legislators can also play an active role in strengthening policies and legislations at national level and their implementation at local level. Parliamentarians also play a vital role in ensuring human rights standards and mechanisms support a rights-based approach to development.

Interest groups and community practitioners

21. Building resilience and promoting disaster risk reduction must be targeted at the community level if it is to have a long-term and sustained impact. As a result, civil society organizations have increasingly become disaster risk reduction practitioners. They have been supported in these efforts by women's groups, children and youth, indigenous groups, people with disabilities, human rights defenders, and others agents of change who recognize that reducing disaster risk and building resilience starts with people in the community and at the local level. The *Midterm Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action*, online dialogue on local action, and views from national-level reports, found a large gap between national and local level action. Therefore, reinforcing resilience at the community level, especially to the most vulnerable populations remains the most critical area of work to progress.

Private sector

22. In the coming decades, trillions of dollars of new investment will pour into hazard-exposed low- and middle-income countries. In most countries, private sector investment represents a high share of the overall investment of around 85 to 95 per cent. How and where this investment is made will be the principal determinant of whether disaster risk continues to grow in the future. Sustainable development will depend on the public and private sector working together to ensure that the risks in all new investments are properly accounted for and managed.

Media

23. The media have an important role to play in creating awareness, disseminating information and informing discourse on issues related to disasters. Media, and increasingly social media, can also hold people and entities to account. Equally, the media can misinform and mislead if it is not sensitized and equipped with the data and training necessary to present issues related to disasters, and particularly disaster risk reduction. Similar to other 'agents of change', a partnership with media requires sustained engagement.

Conclusion

24. Partnering with stakeholders across sectors (like health, education, environment agriculture, planning) is an integral part of reducing the risk of disaster. The *Hyogo Framework of Action* is the guiding instrument in encouraging partnerships and stakeholder engagement. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction partnership operates in a multistakeholder, inclusive, and shared responsibility approach. As a new post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA II) is considered, it will be important to maintain and build on this approach.

25. Such an approach gains political legitimacy and action around the implementation of international agreements and can, for example, be part of the approach in the post-2015 development agenda. This form of multilateralism, where national governments work in partnership with a wide range of actors and stakeholders in order to share the burden and



responsibility as well as success around common interests, is an approach that will help resolve the global issues of our time.

UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda

Membership

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Co-Chair

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Co-Chair

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Department of Public Information (DPI)

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG)

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

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International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

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Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)

Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA)

Peace building Support Office (PBSO)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)
United Nations Global Compact Office
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)
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United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
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World Bank
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